



Behind every great ecosystem is a group of strong, visionary women. Meet some of those who have anchored the Baltimore tech scene for the past decade.

In honor of Women's History Month, we're recognizing and celebrating a few of the women gamechangers and glass breakers (*but certainly not all*) who've spent the past decade driving the Baltimore tech scene forward. We owe a lot to this group of powerful leaders.

Shervonne Cherry is the Head of Spark Baltimore and a 15-year vet of the Baltimore tech scene. She is known for her collaborative community building, design thinking, and startup advocacy, in addition to creating inspirational co-working spaces for the startups working within Spark.

Jess Gartner is the Founder & CEO of Allovue, a company that empowers schools to equitably allocate financial resources. She's also been an advisor, mentor, blogger and culture builder, inspiring countless other Baltimore entrepreneurs.

Claire Broido Johnson is a founder, funder and the preeminent voice for climate change innovation in Maryland. She's the Managing Director of the Maryland Momentum Fund and leads BlueTechMD, a collaborative effort to make Maryland one of the top three BlueTech innovation clusters in the world.

Eileen O'Rourke is CFO of the Abell Foundation, where she has been impacting startups and social entrepreneurs for over 23 years. She's invested in a wide range of Baltimore tech and biotech, and coached and made connections for many more.

LaToya Staten leads strategic projects for Fearless, building community, capacity and working relentlessly to create more opportunities for women and minorities in tech. Latoya brings her statewide networks together on behalf of Baltimore founders.

Deb Tillett is a female tech pioneer, beginning her career more than 30 years ago. She has spent the last 10 years supporting the development and growth of 100s of Baltimore startups as the President & Executive Director of the ETC and AccelerateBaltimore. Don't miss **Accelerate's Demo Day on April 6th!** 🎉

Jess Watson, CEO of Points North believes we all have a story to tell. For the last 10 years, she has partnered with CEOs, executives and entrepreneurs to build brands and marketing that matters. She manages the B'More Creatives and the Baltimore Women in Tech networking groups.

Christy Wyskiel is Executive Director of Johns Hopkins Tech Ventures and has propelled Hopkins into the top tier of innovation universities in the country. She works tirelessly to fill Baltimore's skyline with thriving tech and biotech companies built by the innovations of JHU faculty and students.

WHAT'S UP

What's UP: Founders

- 🎉🎉 A big congratulations to **Sonavi Labs** on **winning the Health, Wearables & Wellbeing category** at the SXSW Pitch event!
- Sicura** closed its **seed funding round**, led by Baltimore's own **Squadra Ventures**, which has been a regular supporter of the cybersecurity startup.
- Shawna Stepp-Jones** is using **Divaneering Lab** to **develop and launch products** like Spundle, and demonstrating what it really means to go all in for your dream.
- EcoMap** and its founders, **Pava LaPere** and **Sherrod Davis**, were selected for the **Pax Momentum's Spring 22 cohort**. 🏆
- The Black Train Trust's **DEI software platform** and medical device startup **Astek Diagnostics** each received a **\$100,000 investment** from TEDCO's **Builders Fund**.
- Introducing **Breakthru**: SportsHi is **changing its name and expanding its mission** to support underrepresented students beyond the sports world.
- EpiWatch** recently **closed a \$415,000 raise** to support clinical tests for its Epilepsy-tracking software designed to work on any smartwatch. 🕒
- Heather Combs** was **named the new CEO** of **StraighterLine** with co-founder **Burck Smith** stepping into the role of Chairman of the Board.
- 💻💻 **Think Systems** has launched a full suite of **K-12 education acceleration solutions**.

Want an intro to any of these companies? **Send us a note!**

What's UP: Funders

- ABS Capital** led the **Series A round** for **RIBBIT Inc.**, a fintech company providing instant bank behavior analytics.
- TEDCO** portfolio companies had 15 successful exits in 2021, with **over \$12.6M in reported market value** -- huge news for Maryland tech!
- 📢 Shoutout to Baltimore's own **JMI Equity** - nominated for an **"Investor of the Year Award"** in Indiana.

What's UP: Friends

- The **Maryland Tech Council** received **\$2.45M in federal funding** to help boost innovation in the state and expand **BioHub Maryland**. 💰
- The “Rise to the Challenge” Pitch Competition from **UBalt's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation** has **selected finalists!**

HEADS UP

Heads UP: Opportunities

- **OneTen**, the **Blacks In Technology Foundation**, and **Udacity** are partnering to offer **2,000 fully-funded scholarships** to train and empower members of the African American community without a four-year degree and to reshape the tech industry.
- The **Social Innovation Lab** at Johns Hopkins University has an immediate opening for a Visual Design Fellow now through April 30. For more information and to apply, email jhtv-sil@jhu.edu. 🎨✍️
- In collaboration with Maryland's four HBCUs, TEDCO launched its new **Women Entrepreneur Leadership Programs**, designed to build an alliance of diverse founders and CEOs and help them grow their companies.

Heads UP: Resources

- 👁️ **Conscience VC** has open-sourced its “goodie bag” of **170+ founder & pre-founder start-up resources**.
- Meet 600+ Hopkins students (**profiled here**) looking for full-time jobs. **Hire Hopkins** is accepting a limited number of companies to participate in their free hiring + matching event. **Apply before April 1!**

Heads UP: Events

- The latest **Conscious Venture Lab** Cohort will be in Baltimore this week to experience our startup community. Come meet them tonight at Equitech Tuesday and sign-up for **Thursday's CVL Meet & Mingle**. 🍷
- The **Academy Investor Network** Speaker Series is hosting **Steve Blank** on **March 31** to discuss how tech will radically modernize national defense.
- Are you a student looking for an internship or job in the Baltimore region? Register for **Collegetown Industry Days** focused on **Emerging Tech** and

Creative Entrepreneurship.

- **Founder Showcase**, the international startup pitch & networking event, will take place virtually on April 6 with a keynote address from Techstars' **David Cohen**. 🎤
- Join **Nick Culbertson**, **Helen Montag** and UpSurge's own **Kory Bailey** on April 13 for a **Roundtable Discussion on innovation in Baltimore** and strategies for attracting talent and capital to support its growth.

RISE UP

Rise UP: Learn

- **Adaptive reuse projects** in the Baltimore region provide unique challenges and opportunities for the future of real estate. 🏠
- **Tyrona Heath** from The B2B Institute at LinkedIn explains why VCs have a **vested interest and moral imperative** in investing equitably.

ICYMI

Catch UP: Media

- **Techstars Equitech Accelerator** alums Sparen Homes, SportsHi (now Breakthru) and Zimbali Networks **will make a home in Charm City!**
- **Paperstack** is on a mission to **provide working capital and financial insights** to e-commerce sellers.
- Governor Larry Hogan announced a workforce development initiative that **eliminates the requirement of a four-year degree** for state government jobs.
- Goldman Sachs announced seven companies in the **inaugural UK Black Tech cohort** of its \$1B investment strategy, **Launch With GS**.

Stay in touch with UpSurge

The UpShot is Baltimore's Equitech ecosystem news, curated for startups, founders, funders and friends, all working together to build the country's first Equitech City. ➡ ➡ ➡

